

Safety ...Off The Job

Making A Splash In The Backyard Pool

Children, summer and water are a trio made to be together. But this trio can also be a deadly combination, especially if you or your neighbors own a pool.

Few of us realize just how risky backyard pools are. Pools and hot tubs are responsible for many drowning accidents involving children.

Consider these poolside safety rules to guard your children against serious or fatal injury:

- Children are fascinated by water and will go to extraordinary extremes to get to it. Check your municipal by-laws for minimum fencing requirements around backyard pools and hot tubs. Generally, fences should be at least 5 feet (1.5 m) high and without footholds. Gate closures should be self closing and locks should be installed high enough up from the fence to keep children from reaching them. Consider multiple barriers between children and the pool. An extra fence, locked door or other barrier between the child

and the pool may give you enough time to discover the child missing and intercept a potential drowning incident.

- Water alarms installed in pools, which react when the water is disturbed, are also available.
- Establish and enforce water safety rules.
- Make sure a responsible adult is present when the pool is in use.
- Have reaching and throwing water safety aids on both sides of the pool.
- Have a first aid kit handy.
- Have a poolside telephone so you don't have to leave "even for a second" to answer calls.
- Don't leave toys by or in the pool to tempt youngsters close to the pool side.
- Treat wading pools as you would a full size swimming pool. Empty them immediately after use.

Children need very little water to drown. Never leave them unattended.

- Watch your children at all times when they are in the pool.
- Invest the time to take a lifesaving course.
- Enroll yourself and your children in a water safety and swimming course. But don't allow such swimming lessons to give you a false sense of security. Most children, like most adults, will panic and forget what they've learned if they run into problems in the water.
- And, most importantly, think of the pool as a dangerous place and respect the associated risks and hazards.

A moment's inattention is all it takes for a drowning accident to happen. Be prepared by being aware of potential poolside dangers.

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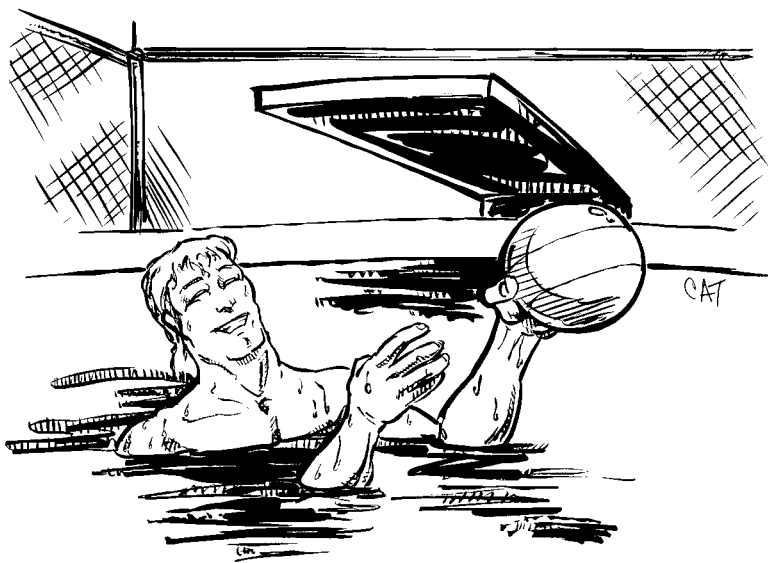
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